

A Study on Marital Adjustment and Depression of Working and Non-Working Married Women

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ABSTRACT:

The sense of one's identity or self is an important dimension of individual's personality giving each one of us unique individuality. Women and depression is holding a relationship of much interest over the last two decades. As more and more women enter the work force, they are increasingly exposed not only of the same work environment as men, but also to unique pressure created by multiple roles and conflicting expectations. The main purpose of the research was to find out the difference in marital adjustment and depression of working and non working married women. The total sample consisted of 200 working and non-working married women (working married women = 100, non-working married women = 100). The Marital Adjustment Questionnaire and Mental Depression Scale were used for collection of data. Obtained data treated with the help of Mean, SDs, t and Correlation statistical techniques. Results indicated that employment status affect significantly on depression of married women. Besides it, there was negative correlation found between marital adjustment and depression of working and non-working married women.

Key Words: Marital Adjustment, Depression, Married Women, Working and Non-Working.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important relationships between a man and women is marriage. It involves emotional and legal commitment that is quite important in any adult life. Marital adjustment as 'the state in which there is an over all feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other' [1]. All the marriages are aimed at happiness in one or another way. Most couples marry filled up with expectations. Some of the expectations will be realistic while others unrealistic. This is due to the complex nature of marriage and each individual is as complex as a universe. Therefore, in marriage two universes close together [2]. Marital adjustment calls for maturity that accepts and understands growth and development in the spouse. If this growth is not experienced and realized fully, death in marital relationship is inevitable. A relationship between couples is not instantaneous rather a slow progress. "It is like the undetected cancer that kills silently and softly". A study on 581 couples and 25% of them disclosed that at some time in the adjustment process, they discussed discovering and 18% had seriously considered it [3].

Depression in a spouse is an issue that most couples will face at some point in their marriage. Depression is a normal and natural response to loss or grief, whether a death, separation from a loved one, job loss, loss of physical health, or relocation. Marital distress and relationship conflict also contribute to depression. Symptoms of depression include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness, anxiety, irritability, agitation, fatigue, low energy, and a reduced activity level are common, and there is also withdrawal from social contact and loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities. There may be changes in appetite, weight or sleep patterns, memory problems or difficulty concentrating. Often there are feelings of worthlessness or inadequacy and a lowered sense of self-esteem. In more serious cases there may be

suicidal thoughts or a feeling that "life is not worth living" [4]. Married women have higher rates of depression than unmarried women, but the reverse is true for men. Marriage seems to confer a greater protective advantage on men than on women [5]. Marital adjustment and depression are strongly related. In a research, collected data on 695 women and 530 men and then re-interviewed them up to 1 year later. During this a number of participants separated from or divorced their spouses though the majority reported stable marriages. Approximately 21% of the women who reported marital split during the study experienced severe depression, a rate three times higher than that from women [6].

There is a robust link in the couples literature that the experience of depression in an individual is linked to marital satisfaction and marital dissatisfaction [7-8]. For instance, Herr, Hammen, & Brennan (2007) [9] compared rates of depression of both married men and women and found that, regardless of gender, those classified as currently depressed also reported significantly lower marital satisfaction. Strikingly, the same study also found that those classified as formerly depressed also reported significantly lower current marital satisfaction, highlighting the strong and lasting link between depression and marital satisfaction. The association between depression and marital satisfaction is further bolstered by the finding that in couples in which the wife is depressed, both husband and wife report higher levels of marital dissatisfaction [10].

Evidence also suggests that the relationship between depression and marital satisfaction may be bi-directional. For example, in a longitudinal study Time 1 marital quality predicted Time 2 depression in both the depressed individual and his/her spouse [11], suggesting that lower marital satisfaction may negatively affect an individual's rate of depression. On the other hand, there is also evidence to suggest that depression may inhibit positive relationship

interactions, causing lower satisfaction. Further, individuals who have experienced depression during adolescence experience more marital dissatisfaction later in life [12]. This preponderance of evidence suggests that not only are depression and marital satisfaction linked, but this association is long lasting, affects both members of the dyad, and is a complicated bi-directional relationship.

There is also an association between betrayals and marital satisfaction which suggests that couples who have and have not experienced a betrayal may differ on a variety of relationship factors [13-14]. Newlyweds asked to rate the likelihood they would experience infidelity over the course of their relationship, for example, gave higher ratings when marital satisfaction was lower [15]. There is additional evidence that experiencing a betrayal alters the relationship between depression and marital satisfaction. For example, women who had been betrayed reported not only higher levels of negative relationship associations, but also reported depressive episodes [16]. Cano and O'Leary (2000) [17] found that depression was significantly correlated with marital satisfaction when a humiliating life event, such as infidelity, was experienced. These studies suggest that not only are depression and marital satisfaction linked in general, but that the presence or absence of a betrayal within the relationship can affect the strength of the link between depression and satisfaction.

Most non-working mothers are full time housewives who spend most of their time at home attending to their children, husband and domestic chores, they have the freedom to go about their day at will and can come home whenever they like to attend to their home, this is where they differ from working class women/mothers who are under the authority of a boss at work hence, cannot go home at will. According to Rogers and May (2003) [18], the quality of marriage and job satisfaction is inter-related; increase in marital happiness is significantly related increase in job satisfaction and increase in marital unhappiness significantly related to decreasing job satisfaction. Nathawat and Mathur (1993) [19] found that in respect of marital adjustment, working women reported significantly better marital adjustment and subjective wellbeing than housewives; they also scored higher than housewives in general health, life satisfaction and self-esteem measures. Iloyd (1980) [20] that found that socioeconomic status is a contributing factor to marital adjustment, they believed that the higher the income, the lower the chance of a divorce. Within the working class women [21], in a study of personality traits and socioeconomic status as predictors of marital adjustment in working women discovered that the difference between marital adjustment of working women of low, middle and high socioeconomic

background was not statistically significant thus, it can be deduced that marital adjustment of working class women was not dependent on their socioeconomic background, rather the personality trait of the woman was a factor in her marital adjustment.

The purpose of this study is in Indian context the phenomenon of marital adjustment and its related variable i-e depression need a great deal of research. This research would be so helpful in knowing the difficulties faced by working and non-working women just to spend a simple married life. Because our society is male-oriented society, women have to face all problems. If they are working they are supposed to perform all duties at office as well as at home.

OBJECTIVES

There are three main objectives studied in this paper:

1. To measure the marital adjustment of working and non-working married women.
2. To assess the depression of working and non-working married women.
3. To know the relationship between marital adjustment and depression of married working and nonworking married women.

HYPOTHESIS

The above aims enable us to formulate following hypothesis:-

1. Employment status (working and non-working) will affect significantly on marital adjustment of married women.
2. There will be significant difference in the depression of working and non-working married women.
3. Marital adjustment will affect significantly the depression of working and non-working married women.

METHODOLOGY

DESIGN

A survey research design was used for the study to assess the marital adjustment and depression of working and non-working class women in Delhi and NCR.

SAMPLE

The sample of 200 married women (100 working and 100 non-working) was taken for this research from Delhi and NCR. Convenient random sampling was used for this study

INSTRUMENTS

1. **Marital Adjustment Questionnaire:** This questionnaire was constructed and standardized by Kumar & Rohatgi (1999). The marital adjustment questionnaire (MAQ)

consists of 25 ‘Yes-No’ type items. A ‘Yes’ response is assigned a score of 1 except for items 4,10 and 19 in which case reverse is applicable. The sum of these values gives the marital adjustment score. The higher the score, the higher would be the marital adjustment. The reliability index ascertained by split half and test-retest method for the scale was found to be 0.70 and 0.84 respectively.

2. **Mental Depression Scale:** Mental Depression Scale was constructed and standardized by Dubey (1993). The scale consists of 50 statements having two alternative answers “yes” and “no”. All the statements are based on the state of mind, when someone is depressed. For yes, 1 mark is given and for No, 0 score is given. Higher the score, greater is the depression. The reliability by test-retest and split-half method was found .64 and .69 respectively.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The collected data were classified and tabulated in accordance with the objectives to arrive at the meaningful and relevant inferences by using arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t–test and correlation.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value of Working and Non-Working Married Women on Marital Adjustment.

| Employment Status | N | Mean | S.D | t |
|-------------------|-----|---------|---------|-------|
| Working | 100 | 20.1200 | 4.73602 | 1.168 |
| Non-working | 100 | 19.2800 | 5.41431 | |

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value of Working and Non-Working Married Women on Depression.

| Employment Status | N | Mean | S.D | t |
|-------------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| Working | 100 | 16.28 | 8.14 | 2.15* |
| Non-working | 100 | 19.31 | 11.46 | |

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Scores Depression and Marital Adjustment. (N=200)

| | Marital Adjustment |
|------------|--------------------|
| Depression | -.496** |

The comparison of scores of working and non-working married women on marital adjustment is performed in the table 1, which shows that there is non-significant difference between working and non-working married

women and their marital adjustment ($t=1.168$, $d.f=198$, $p=n.s$). This finding do not support our hypotheses that working married women and non-working married women differ from each other on marital adjustment.

The analysis of depression scores of subjects (Table-2) shows that there is significant difference between working and non-working married women ($t=2.15$, $d.f=198$, $p<.05$). The results show that non-working married women have to face more depression as compared to working women. It indicates that non-working women are more depressed in their daily life and in home task than those women who are employed. Hence, these findings support our hypotheses.

Results presented in the table 3 indicate that there is highly significant correlation between the two measures. The table suggests the correlation of Marital Adjustment and Depression is $r=-.50$, ($**p<.01$). It indicates that if depression is high in married women then their married life will be suffered and vice-versa. Our hypothesis regarding this relationship is supported.

DISCUSSION

This research was undertaken to investigate the marital adjustment and depression among working and non-working married women. The study hypothesized that “Employment status (working and non-working) will affect significantly on marital adjustment of married women” and findings reject the stated hypothesis. Working and non-working women did not find significant difference on the variable of marital adjustment. This can be supported by Hashmi, Khurshid and Hassan (2007) [22] studied 150 married women (working married women=75, non-working married women=75). Results revealed non-significant difference between working and non-working married women and their marital adjustment. Non-working women also have many problems like working married women. Jamabo and Ordu (2012) [23] in their study regarding marital adjustment of working and non-working women also found that both working class and non-working class women exhibit no clear difference in their marital adjustment. The educational attainment of women does not affect their marital adjustment. Moore et al. (1984) [24] also failed to find significant differences on marital adjustment amongst working and nonworking women.

The findings support our second hypothesis “There will be significant difference in the depression of working and non-working married women.” Comparison of working women with non-working women found to be significant on depression. The results indicate that non-working married women feel more depression in their married life as compared to working married women.

Bhadoria, S. (2013) [25] reported significant differences in level of Anxiety and depression with respect to both working and non working women. Working and non- working women have differ from each other on Apathy, sleep disturbances, pessimism, Fatigability, irritability, self centered, Sadness, Self dislike, Self Acquisition, Self preoccupation, indecisiveness. Dudhatra & Yogesh (2012) [26] found significant difference in depression with respect to both working and non-working women.

The working women had better mental health and reported less depression than the non-working mothers. The most frequently reported source of stress for working mothers was not having enough time to do everything, whereas for non-working mothers lack of social life was a major stressor [27]. Palstam, Bjersing and Mannerkorpi (2012) [28] conducted a study which shows working women have better health than nonworking women in terms of pain, fatigue, stiffness, depression, disease specific health status and physical aspects of quality of life, which represent body functions and overall health status. However, they were equally impaired in tests of physical capacity. Moderate pain levels were compatible with work, while severe pain appeared to compromise work. Fatigue was better tolerated, as women scoring severe levels of fatigue worked.

Another hypothesis of this study is that “Marital adjustment will affect significantly the depression of working and non-working married women”. Results indicated that depressed married woman have to face marital adjustment problems in her married life. She also cannot perform better her married life responsibilities because she is under depression and if a married woman feels depression in her life, it affects her household work, her relationship with spouse and other members of her family. Researchers studied that women feels more depression after marriage and it affect their married life. Because of depression they cannot tolerate their spouses’ behavior and immediately get irritated. This makes their life miserable and leads towards breakup [29].

Herr, Hammen, & Brennan (2007) [30] compared rates of depression of both married men and women and found that, regardless of gender, those classified as currently depressed also reported significantly lower marital satisfaction. Strikingly, the same study also found that those classified as formerly depressed also reported significantly lower current marital satisfaction, highlighting the strong and lasting link between depression and marital satisfaction. The association between depression and marital satisfaction is further bolstered by the finding that in couples in which the wife is depressed, both husband and wife report higher levels of marital dissatisfaction [31].

Some studies have focussed on indicators that covary with depression. The concomitance between depression and marital distress has been emphasised, and there has been a long-standing recognition that both variables are likely to co-occur [8]. This association has been demonstrated within several community-based and clinical samples (e.g. [32-34]. The overlap between marital distress and depression in these samples is approximately 50%, regardless of whether depression is construed as a variation in symptoms or as a diagnosable disorder, in samples selected for marital problems or in samples selected for depression [35-39].

Kim (2012) [40] conducted a study on the relationship between the quality of marital adjustment and depressive symptoms in Korean American couples. Results from linear regression indicated a negative relationship between marital adjustment and depressive symptoms at a significant level for wives and near significant for husbands. The model explained 15% of the variance in wives' depressive symptoms. Laganá, Spellman, Wakefield & Oliver (2011) [41] found that higher depressive symptomatology were associated with worse marital adjustment. Trevino, Wooten and Scott (2007) [42] examined the relationships between the relationships between depression and marital adjustment. Correlations for the total group between depression and overall marital adjustment and the subscales of marital adjustment were significant.

Kouros, Papp and Cummings (2008) [43] researched on newlywed couples and investigated longitudinal associations between marital satisfaction and depressive symptoms in a community sample of 296 couples in established relationships with children. Support was found for reciprocal relations between marital satisfaction and depressive symptoms in couples with established relationships.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded from the above discussion that there are differences in the working and non-working women. The findings of the study indicate that non-working married women have to face more difficulties in their lives like they experienced more depression as compared to working married women. It concludes that on some aspects non-working married women cannot contribute significantly for the well being of their family and it leads to lower marital adjustment. While measuring relationship among both the variables (marital adjustment and depression), it was found that they both are negatively correlated with each other.

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